

GENERAL CPS CASES

A. INVESTIGATION TIME FRAMES

1. Did the investigating worker see the child within the priority time frame?

DCFS policy section 201.5 and 202.5 requires a face-to-face contact with the victim within priority time frames. The purpose of the face-to-face contact is to assess any immediate protection needs for the child. The priority time frame is the time allotted for a caseworker to make a face-to-face contact with a victim involved with the allegation that determined the priority level of the referral. It is preferable to make the contact with the primary victim but another victim involved in the allegation may count as meeting this priority time frame. This contact may or may not include the investigative interview. It is acceptable for a worker to see a child within the priority time frames and actually conduct an investigative interview later. Check the record to see what priority was assigned. The most likely place to find the assigned priority would be at the top of the Child Abuse Neglect Report form (CANR) or on the SAFE general tab. Next you have to determine if the child was seen within the time frame for that assigned priority. The response time starts from the time the investigating worker received notification of the referral from intake, which should be recorded at the top of the CANR form as intake completion date/time or case open date on the SAFE computer system. The time the child was seen is usually documented on the general tab and in the Activity Log. These dates should be compared to ensure consistency. If the dates are different, the date in the activity log will override the date on the general tab. The child must be seen within 60 minutes of the worker receiving notification of the referral for a priority one referral (three hours for rural areas), within 24 hours for a priority two, by 11:59pm of the third working day of the time of the initial referral for a priority three (not including weekends or holidays) and by 11:59pm of the fifth working day for a priority 4 and a case accepted for a family assessment. When a report is accepted for a family assessment, the time frame is met by a visit to the child's home (scheduled or unscheduled) as well as by the interview with the child. When giving an EC answer, write the reason listed on the Missed Priority Form or in the logs in the comments section. Reasons such as high caseload, worker on vacation, etc do not meet the requirements for an EC answer.

Yes	The child was seen within the assigned response time.
No	The child was not seen within the assigned response time; or it is not documented that the child was seen within the assigned response time; or it is not possible to determine timeliness because the response priority is not indicated, the referral received time is not indicated, and/or the time the child was seen is not indicated anywhere in the record.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	A Missed Priority form is completed with an appropriate reason indicated for the missed priority; it is documented elsewhere in the record that the assigned response time could not be met because of extenuating circumstances (e.g., the child could not be located within the response time). Remember, you need to include the extenuating circumstances, as documented in the record, in the comments section.

2. If the child remained at home, did the worker initiate services within 30 days of the referral?

According to DCFS policy section 204.13, initiating services can include DCFS directly providing services as well as referring the family for services from other agencies/providers. Giving written or verbal information to the family about local resources constitutes a referral. These services are to be initiated within 30 days of the start date of the referral. (If an investigation extension has been granted by the Regional Director, services should be initiated within the extension time frame granted.) The worker can indicate services provided to the family on page three of the CANR form. The Activity Log may also document services provided. Services may be listed on the details screen of the Safe computer system. However, these lists may not be specific and it may be necessary to check the logs or other documentation to determine the exact service. In addition, documentation of transfer to PSC, PFP, or PSS would be considered an indication of initiation of services. You will also need to check the record to see if, in fact, there is any indication that the family actually needed any services. You could check the Immediate Protection Safety Assessment form, the CPS Risk Assessment, functional assessment or the Activity Log for such indications. If the child is removed from the home for a short period of time but is returned home prior to the end of the investigation, this question is still applicable and needs to be answered Yes, No or Partial as appropriate. If the worker offers services to the family and the family refuses services, this question may be answered yes.

Yes	Within 30 days of the referral (or within the extension time frame), the worker initiated services for the family.
Partial	There is an indication in the record that services were needed by the family, and the worker initiated some but not all of the needed services, or services were initiated but not within the required time frame.
No	There is an indication in the record that the family needed services, but the worker did not initiate services or there is no evidence that the worker initiated services or no relevant services were available.
Not Applicable	The child/family were already receiving needed services at the time of the referral and no additional services are needed; the family moved out of state before 30 days; the child had been removed from the home AND remained out of the home; the report was unsupported or without merit AND no services were needed by the family; the worker was unable to locate the child and the other family members do not need services.

3. Was the investigation completed within 30 days of CPS receiving the report from intake or within the extension time frame granted if the Regional Director granted an extension?

From the time CPS receives a referral from intake, a CPS caseworker shall have 30 calendar days to complete the investigation as per DCFS policy section 202.3 and 204.8. The date the investigation was completed is recorded as the investigation end date on the CANR form. The completion date may also be found in the Activity Log or on the General tab of the SAFE computer system. For an investigation to be considered complete, there must be an investigation end date listed on the CANR form (or on the General tab) along with a completed CPS Risk Assessment and the Immediate Protection Safety Assessment. If there is no CPS Risk Assessment or Immediate Protection Safety Assessment, but the investigation was closed within 30 days, answer this question Partial. If the worker cannot complete the investigation within 30 days, he/she must request an extension from the Regional Director. The extension must be requested *before* the original 30-day time period is up. The Regional Director may grant a second extension for an additional 30 days if the investigation is being conducted jointly with law enforcement and the information obtained by law enforcement is necessary to determine the case finding or medical records or other reports are needed. The extension approval should be documented on the CANR form or by red asterisk marks on the General tab of the SAFE computer system. Also, a Missed Priority/30 Day Extension Form may be found in the file. There must be a valid reason for granting the extension such as waiting for medical reports, difficult time locating the child, etc. Reasons involving the caseworker's high caseload or vacation are not a valid reason for an extension.

Yes	The investigation was completed within 30 days, or the Regional Director granted an extension and the investigation was completed within the extension time frame.
Partial	The investigation completion date was within 30 days (or within the extension time frame), but there is no Risk Assessment or Immediate Protection Safety Assessment; or an extension request was submitted to the Regional Director, but there is no evidence as to whether or not the extension was granted (this should only apply if the investigation was completed within 60-90 days). The extension is granted and the case was closed within that time frame but the reason for the extension is unknown.
No	The investigation was not completed within 30 days (or not completed within the extension time frame if an extension had been granted); or there is no documentation that the investigation was completed within 30 days; timeliness could not be determined because the date intake received the report was missing and/or the date the investigation was completed was missing; or there is no case closure form and/or risk assessment.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	There is documentation in the record that the investigation could not be completed within the required time frames for reasons beyond the worker's control. (e.g., the child/family was on vacation). Put reason in the comments section--worker vacation, high caseload, etc reasons do not meet this requirement.

B. CONTENT OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. Did the worker conduct the interview with the child outside the presence of the alleged perpetrator?

According to DCFS policy section 203.1, the required personal interview with the child must be conducted outside the presence of the alleged perpetrator. Any child identified as an alleged victim in an allegation having the ability to communicate verbally or through other reliable means (sign language, writing, interpreter, etc) shall be interviewed. This means that all children need to be interviewed regardless of age if they are able to communicate. It can be assumed that a child under age three is usually unable to communicate well enough to describe abuse situations. Check the Activity Log for evidence that the interview was conducted and if it was conducted outside the presence of the alleged perpetrator. If the child is interviewed with one parent present when the other parent is the alleged perpetrator, and it later turns out the parent present at the interview is also a perpetrator, it should be recorded that the interview took place outside the presence of the perpetrator, since that was true at the time. If child is interviewed with a person and it is unknown if the person is the perpetrator this question can still be answered YES.

Yes	The child was interviewed and the alleged perpetrator was not present during the child's interview.
Partial	The child was interviewed but the alleged perpetrator was present during the child's interview.
No	There is no evidence regarding the presence of the perpetrator during the interview or no interview was conducted/documented.
Not Applicable	No interview was conducted/documented because the child is unable to communicate verbally or through other reliable means; law enforcement conducted interview and DCFS has a copy of the report and no other information is needed.

2. Did the worker interview the child's natural parents or other guardian when their whereabouts are known?

DCFS policy section 203.1 states the child's natural parents or other guardian shall be interviewed regardless of residence, unless they are incarcerated for the entire investigation or their whereabouts are unknown. Check the Activity Log, functional assessment, case closure summary and other documentation in the record for evidence of an interview with both parent(s)/guardian. If only one parent is interviewed and the reason is documented as to why the other parent is not interviewed, then the answer is may be answered Yes. If the allegation involves a child in foster care, the caseworker will need to be interviewed if the child's parents' rights have been terminated or the parents' whereabouts are unknown. However, if the child is in foster care and the parents are still involved with the child, then the child's parents need to be interviewed. If law enforcement interviews the parents and DCFS believes the interviews were satisfactory, the written report has been provided to DCFS and no additional information is needed, then the DCFS investigator does not need to re-interview the parents. If law enforcement interviews one parent and DCFS interviews the other parent, this question may be answered yes. If law enforcement interviews one parent and DCFS does not interview the other parent and no valid reason is given, this question should be answered no.

Yes	The worker interviewed the child's parent(s)/guardian. The worker interviewed one parent and law enforcement interviewed the other parent.
Partial	The whereabouts of both natural parent(s)/guardian were known and the worker interviewed one parent but not the other.
No	The whereabouts of the natural parent(s)/guardian was known and the worker did not interview either parent or there is no evidence that the worker interviewed the parent(s)/guardian. Law enforcement interviewed one parent and DCFS did not interview the other parent.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	There is documentation in the record that the worker attempted to interview (at least two attempts were made) the parent(s)/guardian, but they refused to participate.
Not Applicable	The child was abandoned (parents unknown); or the parents' whereabouts were unknown; or law enforcement interviewed the parents and the investigator did not need additional information as per the police report. One or both parents are incarcerated and are not released prior to the case closure.

3. Did the worker interview third parties who have had direct contact with the child, where possible and appropriate?

DCFS policy section 203.1 requires personal interviews (in person or telephonically) with third parties or collateral contacts who have first hand knowledge about the allegations, unless it is inappropriate or impossible. If a third party or collateral contact is identified as an eye witness or has first hand knowledge about the abuse/neglect a personal interview must be conducted (in person or telephonically). Third parties may include school personnel, health care providers, day care providers, relatives, neighbors, and others who have had direct association with the child or are otherwise knowledgeable about the case and are believed to have information regarding the allegation or the safety of the child. The referent must be interviewed if he/she was an eyewitness of the allegations or has first hand knowledge of the reported abuse. If the investigator interviews the referent, the requirement for this question will be met. The support person present during the child's interview could be considered a third party if the support person was interviewed. Look in the Activity Log and the Summary of Contacts form for an indication of third parties interviewed. You may also find information in the case closure summary. Look for interview transcripts or reports from doctors and other health care providers as well as school staff members. Siblings who are listed as victims for the same allegations as the PV cannot be considered third parties. Stepparents who are primary caretakers of the victims cannot be considered third parties. DCFS staff who are providing a direct service to the family and who have first hand knowledge about the services the family is receiving can be considered a third party. If law enforcement interviews the third parties, provides a written report to DCFS of the interviews and DCFS feels the interviews are satisfactory and no additional information is needed, the investigator does not need to re-interview the third parties.

Yes	At least one third party was interviewed.
No	There was an indication of third parties, who had contact with the child, but the worker did not interview any third parties or there is no evidence that a third party was interviewed.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	There is documentation in the record that it was not possible to locate identified third parties in this case; the third parties contacted refused to participate.
Not Applicable	There were no third parties identified who had direct contact with the child and who had relevant information; or it is documented that the report should be supported on the word of the child and/or other available evidence, and no third party interviews are necessary; or that law enforcement requested no interviews with third parties because of on-going criminal investigations; or law enforcement interviewed the third parties and DCFS did not re-interview them because no additional information was needed based on the report from law enforcement.

4. Did the CPS worker make an unscheduled home visit?

An unscheduled home visit must be made as part of the investigation as per DCFS policy section 203.2. Check the Activity Log and/or Case Closure summary for documentation of an unscheduled home visit. You cannot assume a home visit was unscheduled if there is no indication in the record to make it clear. The worker must specify that the home visit was unscheduled. The home visit should occur in the child's home where the child normally lives and/or where the abuse occurred. If the child moves from the home and there is no intention to return the child to the home such as moved from the mother's home to the father's home or another relative's home, the unscheduled home visit may occur in the home where the child is residing at the time of the investigation. Remember that the reason for the home visit is to ensure the home is safe for the child. An unscheduled home visit does not need to occur if it is believed the alleged perpetrator does not live in the child's home **AND** the alleged perpetrator does not have access to the child.

Yes	The worker made an unscheduled home visit.
No	The worker did not make an unscheduled home visit or there is no evidence that the worker made an unscheduled home visit.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	There is documentation in the record that the family's address was incorrect; or the worker was unable to locate the family's home; or the worker documented two or more attempts to visit the home but could not get in (no one was home or entry was refused or the family has moved).
Not Applicable	The family is homeless and the family's current address is unknown; the parents are in jail/hospital/rehab center for the entire 30 days and the child is placed elsewhere. The alleged perpetrator does not live in the child's home and the alleged perpetrator does not have access to the child, thus an unscheduled home visit is not necessary.

C. HEALTH ASSESSMENTS AS PART OF THE INVESTIGATION

1. If this is a Priority I case involving severe maltreatment, severe physical injury, or recent sexual abuse causing trauma to the child, was a medical examination of the child obtained no later than 24 hours after the report was received?

First check to see if this is a Priority I case. If not, answer question 1 in this section Not Applicable. If this is a Priority I case, check the Child Abuse Neglect Report form (CANR), and the Activity Log to determine whether or not this Priority I case involves an allegation of severe maltreatment, severe physical injury, or recent sexual abuse (within the last 72 hours) causing trauma to the child. If so, check the Activity Log for evidence that the worker obtained a medical examination no later than 24 hours after the report was received. Evidence of the medical examination may also be found on the Person Tab of the SAFE computer system. Refer to DCFS policy section 202.9 for requirements.

Yes	This is a Priority I case involving severe maltreatment, severe physical injury or recent sexual abuse causing trauma to the child, and a medical examination was obtained within 24 hours of the report; or the referral came from the child's health care provider as a result of his/her recent assessment of the child and another assessment was not necessary.
Partial	This is a Priority I case involving severe maltreatment, severe physical injury or recent sexual abuse causing trauma to the child, and a medical examination was obtained, but not within 24 hours.
No	This is a Priority I case involving severe maltreatment, severe physical injury or recent sexual abuse causing trauma to the child, and a medical examination was not obtained, or there is no evidence that a medical examination was obtained.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	This is a Priority I case involving severe maltreatment, severe physical injury or recent sexual abuse causing trauma to the child, and it is documented in the record that the worker attempted to obtain a medical examination within 24 hours but could not for reasons beyond the worker's control, e.g., it was impossible to get to the nearest available doctor within 24 hours.
Not Applicable	This is not a Priority I case or this is a Priority I case, but the report (allegation) did not involve severe maltreatment, severe physical injury or recent sexual abuse causing trauma to the child; or it is documented in the record that the allegation was clearly unfounded and no medical evaluation was necessary.

2. If this case involves an allegation of medical neglect, did the worker obtain an assessment from a health care provider within 30 days of the referral?

First check to see if this case involves an allegation of medical neglect. If not, answer question 2 Not Applicable. If this is a medical neglect case, check to see if an assessment from a health care provider was obtained within 30 days of the referral. The DCFS policy specifies the health care provider should be a physician, physician's assistant, nurse practitioner, or registered nurse. However, if the medical neglect allegation is limited to mental health issues, the health care provider may be a licensed mental health professional (CSW, LCSW, PhD, MD). If the worker consults with the child's health care provider (by phone or otherwise), that may be considered an assessment, as long as the health care provider had seen the child in regard to the circumstances involved in the medical neglect allegation. Check the Activity Log, the Health Visit Report form, medical records, correspondence or reports from the provider for evidence that the worker obtained an assessment from a health care provider. The date of the medical assessment may also be found on the Person Tab of the Safe computer system. The assessment is to be obtained as part of the investigation, therefore within 30 days. (If the Regional Director has granted an investigation extension, the assessment should be obtained within the extension time frame granted.) Refer to DCFS policy section 202.9C5 for more information.

Yes	This case involves an allegation of medical neglect, and an assessment from a health care provider was obtained within 30 days of the referral (or within the extension time frame); or the referral came from the child's health care provider as a result of his/her recent assessment of the child, and another assessment was not necessary.
Partial	This case involves an allegation of medical neglect, and an assessment from a health care provider was obtained, but not within 30 days (or within the extension time frame).
No	This case involves an allegation of medical neglect, and an assessment from a health care provider was not obtained, or there is no evidence that an assessment was obtained.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	This case involves an allegation of medical neglect, and the worker was unable to locate the family/child to arrange an assessment.
Not Applicable	This case does not involve an allegation of medical neglect; or it is documented in the record that the medical neglect allegation was clearly unsubstantiated and no assessment was necessary.

D. INVESTIGATION FINDINGS

1. Were the case findings of the report based on facts obtained during the investigation?

The case findings/results should be documented in the record (*e.g.*, the CANR form, activity logs or the general tab or the details tab of the Safe computer system). As per DCFS policy section 204.10 and 204.14, the presence of such documentation in the file, with a finding specified and explained, should provide evidence that a decision was made based on the facts in the case. There are six case finding results: supported, unsupported, without merit, family assessment, unable to complete investigation and false report. The decision to support or unsupport may be made based on the child's word alone. However, the decision to unsupport contrary to the child's word is allowed if other evidence exists. The decision to unsupport may not be based on an inability to identify or locate the perpetrator or solely because the perpetrator was an out-of-home perpetrator. The decision to unsupport the allegations may not be based on improved conditions in the situation. If the examining health care provider concludes that serious physical injury is nonaccidental or that sexual abuse or medical neglect has occurred, the case shall be supported. You will have to review the Activity Log, the Detail and/or the General Tab of the SAFE computer system, CANR form for documentation of the reason for the case findings decision, and to determine whether or not these rules were followed.

Yes	<p>The decision was based on facts obtained during the investigation; that is clear documentation which specifies a finding and explanation for finding, and, if the finding was unsupported, all the following conditions were met:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ The unsupported decision was not based on an inability to identify or locate the perpetrator or solely because the perpetrator was an out-of-home perpetrator.▪ The unsupported decision was not based on improved conditions in the home.▪ If the unsupported decision was contrary to the child's word, there is other evidence in the file supporting that decision.
Partial	<p>There were multiple allegations in the case, some of which had findings based on facts as explained above, and some of which did not.</p>
No	<p>The decision made in the case is not based on facts at the time of the report or violated one of the rules discussed above; or there is no evidence in the record as to the basis for the decision.</p>

E. SHELTER CARE

The questions in this section only apply if the child was removed from home and placed into shelter care. *Shelter care* refers to the temporary placement the child is in immediately after being removed from home *unless* the child is placed with a natural parent, a relative, in a former foster home, or in a foster home which is not classified in the data system as a shelter foster home. Shelter placements are coded in the computer as SCP, SHN, or SEP. Shelter care does *not* include:

- placement with a natural parent or relative;
- placement in a former foster home or in a foster home that is not classified as a shelter foster home at the time of the placement;
- placement in detention or youth corrections;
- placement in a residential treatment center or other institution;
- hospitalization.

1. Was the child placed in a shelter placement?

Check the placement record and elsewhere in the file to determine whether or not the child was placed into shelter care as defined above. If not, you may stop at this point.

Yes
No

The child was placed in a shelter placement.
The child was not placed in a shelter placement.

2. Did the worker visit the child in the shelter placement within 48 hours of removal from the child's home to determine the child's adjustment to the placement and need for services?

DCFS policy section 205.2 states the caseworker shall visit the child in the shelter placement within 48 hours after the child is removed from the home to assess the child's adjustment to the shelter placement and determine any need for services. Weekends and holidays are not excluded from this requirement. Check the Activity Log and elsewhere in the record for evidence that the worker visited the child in shelter care within 48 hours from removal from the home and assessed the child's well being. The worker whom placed the child in shelter or the on-going CPS worker should make this visit when the on-call worker has transferred the case or the worker's supervisor when the CPS worker is unavailable.

Yes	The worker visited the child in shelter care within 48 hours of removal from the child's home to determine the child's adjustment to placement and need for services.
No	The worker did not visit the child in shelter care within 48 hours of removal, or there is no evidence that the worker visited the child. The worker visited the child in shelter care but did not address the child's adjustment or need for services. The child was visited but not in the shelter placement.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	The worker was unable to visit the child within 48 hours of removal from the home for reasons beyond the worker's control as documented in the record. (Put reason in the comment section.)
Not applicable	The child was returned home within 48 hours of removal and before the worker had an opportunity to visit the child.

3. After the first 48 hours, did the worker visit the child in the shelter placement at least weekly, until the CPS case closure or until transferred to a foster care caseworker, to determine the child's adjustment to the placement and need for services?

DCFS policy section 205.2 states caseworkers must visit the child in the shelter placement once per week after the initial visit that occurred within 48 hours of removal from home. The purpose of these visits is to assess the child's adjustment to the placement and need for services. Check the Activity Log and elsewhere in the record for evidence that the worker visited the child in the shelter placement at least weekly as long as the child is in a shelter placement until the CPS case closes or the case is transferred to a foster care caseworker. These visits should be made by the on going CPS worker or the worker's supervisor when the CPS worker is unavailable. Weekly visits should occur every calendar week (*i.e.*, Sunday - Saturday).

Yes	The worker visited the child in the shelter placement at least weekly to determine the child's adjustment to the placement and need for services.
Partial	The worker visited the child in the shelter placement, but not weekly. The caseworker visited the child but not in the shelter placement.
No	The worker did not visit the child in the shelter placement, or there is no evidence that the worker visited the child.
Not Applicable	The child returned home or was placed in foster care before one week; or CPS case closed or was transferred to a foster care worker before one week.

4. Within 24 hours of the child's placement in shelter care, did the worker make reasonable efforts to gather information essential to the child's safety and well being and was this information given to the shelter care provider?

The DCFS policy section 205.2 requires that the worker make reasonable efforts to gather information essential to the child's safety and well-being (such as information about current illness, prescription medications, aggressive or other behavioral concerns, etc.) and that this information shall be provided to the shelter care provider within 24 hours of placement. Reasonable efforts include contacting the child's parents, health care provider, and schoolteacher or day care provider. Check the Activity Log, documents from the 24-hour meeting (especially the medical section of the 24 Hour Team Shelter/Foster Parent Information Form), Child Welfare Risk Assessment, CPS 23 Removal Form and elsewhere in the record for evidence that the worker contacted any of the above individuals for information about the child. The worker should contact as many of the above individuals as necessary to obtain the essential information. If the first person contacted provided all the information, no other contacts are necessary. If the worker attempted to contact the child's parents, the health care provider, and the teacher or day care provider and no one was able to provide the necessary information, you should still answer this question Yes, the worker made reasonable efforts. There needs to be clear documentation that the information was given to the shelter care provider. If the CPS23 form is completely filled out with all known information and the shelter provider signed the form, it can be assumed that the provider received the necessary information.

Yes	The worker made reasonable efforts to gather essential information about the child and the available information was given to the shelter provider within 24 of placement in shelter care.
Partial	The worker made reasonable efforts, but not within 24 hours of placement; or the worker obtained the information about the child but did not give the information to the shelter provider.
No	The worker did not make reasonable efforts to gather essential information about the child; or there is no evidence that the worker made reasonable efforts.
Considered for Extenuating Circumstance	The worker was unable to identify or locate individuals who could provide information about the child.
Not Applicable	The child was abandoned and there was no one to contact for information about the child.

5. During the CPS investigation, were reasonable efforts made to locate possible kinship placements?

DCFS policy section 205.4 states the CPS worker shall be prepared to report to the court whether the child has any relatives who are able and willing to take temporary custody of the child. Check reports to the court, the Shelter Order, activity logs, or other documents to determine whether or not the worker made reasonable efforts to locate possible kinship placements. Information may be found under the person tab in SAFE under the removal/custody button. If the child is placed with a relative, it can be assumed that the worker made efforts to locate kinship placements and this question should be answered Yes.

Yes	The worker made reasonable efforts to locate kinship placements.
No	The worker did not make reasonable efforts to locate kinship placements; or there is no evidence that the worker made efforts to locate kinship placements.
Not Applicable	The child returned home prior to or at the shelter hearing and a kinship placement was not necessary.